

Project progress Report as at 24.11.2024

Project Title: Initiatives to Conserve the White-backed Vulture, a case of Maswa Game Reserve (MGR) – Tanzania

Project ID: 4 1 7 4 4 -1

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1. Project Summary

White-backed Vulture (WbV) is listed as critically endangered in the IUCN Red List. Poisoning and habitat loss caused by human activity are major risks to WbV. The Maswa Game Reserve (MGR) has been supporting WbV's activities. Despite its importance in vulture conservation MGR is threatened by human activities, and there are no on-going initiatives to protect WbV's habitat in MGR. As a result, this study aims at enhancing the conservation of WbV in MGR through assessing WbV's habitat selection and community attitude on the species which will be used to raise initiatives to conserve WbV in the area.

Project update

2. REPORT ON ROAD SURVEY FOR WHITE-BACKED VULTURES HABITAT SELECTION IN MASWA GAME RESERVE

This report summarizes the findings of Road Survey conducted in Maswa Game Reserve to identify White-backed Vulture's habitat selection. The survey was conducted for 06 days from 10th October 2024 to 15th October 2024.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The Survey was carried out by using Vehicle to cover diverse habitat of MGR. The survey was done between 9hrs and 17hrs where Vultures are known to be active. Observation was made from both sides of the vehicle targeting the following parameters: Habitat types, Species of the Vulture, Number of Vultures for a specific species spotted, Activity of Vulture in this case four activities were considered: breeding activities abbreviated by BA, Movement abbreviated by MV, feeding abbreviated by FD and Resting/Perching abbreviated by RT.

FINDINGS

- Habitat Types identified

Four main habitat types were identified in MGR as follows:

- I. Woodland. This was characterized by mixtures of trees and shrubs dominated by acacia species. It is the dominant vegetation type in MGR covering about 65% of entire survey areas.
- II. Riverine forest. These were forested areas along Simiyu River and Duma River. Trees in this habitat were tall and wide.
- III. Wooded Grassland: there were small patches which were characterized by the mixture of shrubs/trees and grasses.
- IV. Grassland. This was characterized by open grass-dominated areas with minimal trees covering.

Population Count

During the Survey, only Six (**06**) White- backed Vultures were spotted in Maswa Game Reserve. This number reflects an extremely low population, raising concerns about their presence and habitat stability. This low count has been attributed by their migration of vultures to Serengeti National Park following Wildebeest Migration, as Vultures depend on carrion from wildebeest and other ungulates. Thus, the movement of wildebeest aligns with food availability hence affecting Vultures availability.

This Survey has highlighted a critical dependency of White-backed Vultures on migratory ungulate population. This is to say conservation effort should consider seasonal dynamics of food availability and ensure collaboration between Maswa Game Reserve and Serengeti National Park to monitor and protect Vulture population across their range.

Throughout the survey period a total of Six (6) Vultures were observed in three points which were as identified in the table below.

S/N	SPECIES OF WHITE BACKED VULTURE	NUMBER	ACTIVITIES	HABITAT TYPE	GPS COORDINATES	
1.	White-backed Vulture	01	PERCHING	Woodland	X: 665734.826 Y: 9696001.70	Appendix I
2.	White-backed Vulture	04	PERCHING	Riverine Forest	X: 680809.872 Y: 9665943.12	Appendix II
3.	White-backed	01	MOVEMENT	Grassland	X: 658594.5174 Y: 96455422.533	Appendix III

	Vulture					
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Table 01: Vultures spotted on the Road Survey.

3. Appendices



Appendix I

Photo Credit: Leena Lulandala



Appendix II

Photo Credit: Lucia Reveliani

Appendix II



Appendix III

Photo Credit: Lucia Reveliani



Appendix IV: field Team conducting Vulture Survey.

Photo Credit: Jonathan Mkaluka.



Appendix IV: Maswa Game Reserve Head Quater.

Photo Credit: Lucia Reveliani.